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Historical and war threads in urban folklore songs

Songs of urban folklore did not address war and historical issues particularly broadly.¹ However, reacting vividly to all events related to the urban community, they referred, on the one hand, to war as a “military” phenomenon, on the other, they expressed the feelings and fears accompanying the city’s everyday life in war conditions.

Urban folklore developed where the urban organisms developed along with the suburbs from which the urban song grew. From here you can trace this repertoire primarily on the example of Warsaw and Lviv. Especially since mainly these cities have a broader documented musical folklore of suburbs and streets from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and later.² However, war and historical threads are also clearly visible in Silesian folklore, which, due to the specificity of the region, contains elements of rural, urban and professional traditions, mainly mining. This is due to the fact that at least until the end of the nineteenth century, miners largely recruited from the rural population and before typical mining settlements were built, they returned to work after work

¹ When I write about historical themes, I mean the presence in the layer of songs of urban historical figures, dates or places where a historical event took place (e.g. a battle). The melody does not contain any historical references and only in some cases I give an example including musical notation.

² These are mainly publications containing lyrics and melodies of songs belonging to urban folklore. I used them when preparing this text.

– to the countryside. Hence, many elements of peasant culture, especially in customs and folklore, were long present in the daily lives of mining families, also when they were already living in mining settlements.³ The rich folklore of workers' Łódź is characterized by a multitude of socio-revolutionary themes, which is a separate issue, not addressed here.

The historical events that were reflected in the city songs were primarily the First World War and the related desire of Poles remaining under partition to achieve independence and the Second World War. I was looking for such narratives in an amateur repertoire, partly called street, trying to skip numerous songs written during the wars by authors, more or less known, sometimes still anonymous. The distinguishing feature of many songs belonging to urban folklore is the dialect and the characteristic style of expression. The subject of the analysis is the verbal layer, the studied verbal threads are not reflected in the music layer.

World War I and regaining independence

Lviv before the First World War, and thus as part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, had a large military contingent, barracks and military warehouses. Many Lviv songs describe the lives of soldiers serving in the Austrian army, customs in the barracks, being on a pass, etc., and these songs are not devoid of humorous elements.

Events announcing the imminent outbreak of the First War were the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which involved sending imperial troops to these regions, including soldiers from Lviv – “Lviv children”. They formed the third battalion of the 30th Infantry Regiment, and their departure to Bosnia was reflected in an anonymous song called *March of Lviv children* (*Marsz lwowskich dzieci*):⁴

³ Wanda MROZEK, “Tradycyjna rodzina górnicza – jej cechy społeczne i kierunki przeobrażeń” [Traditional coalminer familie – social quality and trends of metamorphosis], in *Górnicy stan w wierzeniach, obrzędach, humorze i pieśniach* [Coalminers in beliefs, customs, humour and songs], ed. D. Simonides (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy, 1988), 97–132.

⁴ Jerzy HABELA, Zofia KURZOWA, *Lwowskie piosenki uliczne, kabaretowe i okolicznościowe do 1939 roku* [Lviv street-cabaret and incidental songs to 1939] (Kraków: PWM, 1997), 236.



Czemu, ach czemu na Cytadeli
ruch tak ugromny i gości wielu?
O, bu tam dzisiaj wielka parada,
du Bośni jedzie Żelazna Brygada.

Why, oh why on the Citadel
traffic so huge and many visitors?
Oh, there is a great parade today,
the Iron Brigade goes to Bosnia.

W głuchym milczeniu, w kompletny zbroi,
trzeci batalion w szeregu stoi.
[...]
Na dworcu przyszedł batalion trzeci.
Jadu, ach jadu w świat lwowski dzieci.
[...]

In deaf silence, in complete armor,
the third battalion in the series is standing.
[...]
The third battalion came to the station.
Out to the world leave the Lviv children.
[...]

This regiment is called the Iron Brigade in the song, while the Citadel is a mountain located on the south side of old Lviv, on which the Austrians built large barracks. “Lviv children” are boys from the districts of Lviv mentioned in the song Łyczakowa, Gródka and Zamarstynów, inhabited mainly by workers and craftsmen. The lyrics do not contain any other historical information, but there are many emotional expressions for farewells and parting. The language also draws attention – the song is kept in the city dialect of Lviv, known as Bałak.⁵ The song was so widespread, even in Polish military formations during World War I, that it was sung with other, partly changed texts, updating its message. These later versions already refer to the events of the First War, and also take into account the current political situation. One of them speaks of the intention to liberate Warsaw, and maybe also the country, from the hands of tsarism.⁶

⁵ Ibidem, 46–47.

⁶ Ibidem, 241.

[...]
 Idu, idu na Warszawy,
 Pójdu, pójdu w boji krwawy,
 [...]
 Wojny z Moskwu przyszli czasy,
 [...]
 Pośród wojenny udmenty,
 Świt Ujczyzny ruzpuczenty.
 Du Królestwa wnet wkroczy my,
 ud caratu uwolnimy,
 [...]

[...]
 They go, they go to Warsaw,
 They will go, they will go into a bloody battle,
 [...]
 Wars with Moscow have come,
 [...]
 In the midst of the turmoil of war,
 Homeland beginning has begun.
 We will enter the Kingdom soon,
 we will free us from tsarism,
 [...]

This version was probably created in connection with the start of hostilities against Russia by the Austrian army, which gave hope for the liberation of Warsaw from Russian hands. Fragments of the text of all variants of the *March of Lviv children* without historical references are filled with fear and regret of leaving Lviv. And there was no combat enthusiasm.

The first “starting” version of the *March of Lviv children* refers to the departure of soldiers to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in connection with its annexation by Austria-Hungary. One of its later versions refers to the march on the Balkan front of the Lviv unit, after the universal mobilization was announced, just before the outbreak of the war:⁷



W dzień dyszczo - wy i pu - nu - ry z Cy - ta - de - li i - du Gó - ry
 szy - ry - ga - mi lwo - ski dzie - ci i - du tu - łać si pu świe - ci.
 Na gra - ni - cy Cza - rnu - gó - rza cze - ka ich mi - tre - nga du - ła,
 mo - ży na - wet tam czy - ha na nich wróg, a winc prowadź, pro - wadź Bóg!
 Mo - ży na - wet tam czy - ha na nich wróg, a winc prowadź, pro - wadź Bóg!

⁷ Ibidem, 239.

[...]
Na granicy Czarnugórza
czeka ich mitrenga duża,
|:moży nawet tam czyha na nich wróg,
a winc prowadź, prowadź Bóg:|.
[...]

[...]
On the border of Montenegro
tiring big work ahead of them,
|: maybe even an enemy is lurking there,
so lead, lead God:|.
[...]

It is interesting to note that the lyrics to the songs of the rural environment contain examples of looking at the war from a different perspective. Although not belonging to urban folklore, a song from the repertoire of one of the groups of Polish highlanders refers to the same political situation as the fragment of the Lviv song cited above. There the theme of the Austro-Hungarian army fights in Herzegovina is “reported” by a soldier, probably a highlander, serving in this army:⁸

Hercegowina, piykno kraina,
|:musemy jom zawojować lo cysorza pana –
ha,ha :|

Herzegovina, beautiful land,
|: we must conquer it for the emperor –
ha, ha: |

Ćcimy cysorza, jego rodzinie,
|:musemy mu zawojować Hercegowine :|.

We honor the emperor, his family,
|: we must conquer Herzegovina :|

Ćcimy cysorza, nasego pana,
cały dzień my wojowali, a pili do rana –
ha,ha :|
[...].

We worship the emperor our master
we fought all day and drank until morning
– ha, ha: |
[...]

Here, contrary to Lviv folklore, war is presented from a quite pleasant side. In addition, the soldier’s attitude to the Austrian emperor is noteworthy, who is not seen as a representative of foreign power. This perspective in the villages was hardly present, because, as Jan St. Bystron wrote: *there is a great lack of*

⁸ Piotr KULIG, *Źródła pieśni. Górale nadpopradzcy. Pieśni śpiewane w XIX i XX wieku w Piwnicznej i okolicach* [Root of songs. Highlanders from Poprad-river area. Songs sung in 19th and 20th century in Piwniczna and Piwniczna area] (Piwniczna-Zdrój: Stowarzyszenie Górali Nadpopradzkich, 2016), 113. Although the publication contains the song folklore of highlanders from the Piwniczna area, highlanders from various parts of the Carpathians served in the Austrian army. Therefore, such an attitude to the war and the Austro-Hungarian emperor can not be attributed only to highlanders from these areas.

*historical knowledge among peasants.*⁹ Highlanders had a strong sense of belonging to their own local group, not a bit abstract country.

Oslawija was mentioned in another Lviv song. This is one of the places where fights between Italy and the Austro-Hungarian army took place in 1915, including the 30th Lviv Infantry Regiment. The entire text is devoted to this event, and it is a detailed description of the fight of Lviv soldiers with an Italian opponent:¹⁰

Każdy serce ledwu bij,
Rozkaz jest: na Oslawiji!
[...]
Włochy walu granatami,
Pan porucznik biegni z nami.
Tyraliery rozwijamy,
I granaty dobywamy
[...]

Every heart is barely beating
The order is: on Oslawija!
[...]
Italians are pounding grenades,
The lieutenant is running with us.
We scatter infantry ranks,
We take out grenades.
[...]

A separate group among the Lviv songs are those that refer to the wartime situation of the city, occupied several times by foreign troops, as well as to the events of the Polish-Ukrainian war of 1918-19. From the period of these struggles comes an anonymous song sung to the melody of the military song already known in the nineteenth century *War, war, what kind of a lady are you* (*Wojenko, wojenko, cóżeś ty za pani*):¹¹

Wujenko, wujenko, cóż ty za królowa,
|: ży za tobu idzi, ży za tobu idzi
wiara z Łyczakowa:|.
[...]
Nasza ufinzywa zaczn si ud Lwowa.
|: A kto jo ruzpoczni, a kto jo ruzpoczni?
Wiara z Łyczakowa.:|

War, war, what a queen are you,
|: that follows you, that follows you
Faith from Łyczakowa:|.
[...]
Our offensive will start from Lviv.
|: And who will start it and who will start it?
Faith from Łyczakowa:|.

The text refers to the situation when the Polish army moved to help Poles who fought against Ukrainian nationalists, forcing them to leave the city. An-

⁹ Jan St. BYSTRON, *Pieśni ludu polskiego* [Polish folk songs] (Kraków: Nakładem Księgarni Geograficznej Orbis, 1924), p. 96.

¹⁰ HABELA, KURZOWA, *Lwowskie piosenki uliczne, kabaretowe i okolicznościowe do 1939 roku*, 243.

¹¹ Ibidem, 251.

other Lviv song refers to the same events, in which specific places in Lviv and even specific people were included:¹²

andante

A kie-dy zły Ru - sin na nasz Lwów na - pa - dał, to mu lwo-ski
ba - tiar za - ra ud - pu - wia - dał: To - i, to - i, ro - i,
to - i, ro - i, ra, ta - ki Lwów nasz be - dzi, jak nam Pan Bóg da.

allegro

W mu - gi - li cie - mny śpi na wie - ki, hu - sia, siu - sia, hu - sia, sia.
Wy - cion-gnuł no - gi, zam - knął pu - wie - ki, hu - sia, siu - sia, hu - sia, sia.

A kiedy zły Rusin na nasz Lwów napadał,
to mu lwoski batiar zara
udpuwiał.

[...]

Ruszyli do szturm z Sinkiwicza szkoły.

[...]

I du Abrahama na Góry Stracenia

Poszła lwowska wiara na pirszy sknieni.

[...]

And when the bad Russky invaded our Lviv,
it was the Lviv batiar who answered him
right away.

[...]

They stormed from Sienkiewicz's school.

[...]

And to Abraham to the Mountains of Loss

Lviv faith went at first nod.

[...]

The Sienkiewicz school was a meeting point for the defenders of Lviv, while Roman Abraham was the commander of one of the defense points – Mount Loss (Góra Stracenia). One of the youngest defenders of the city – 14-year-old Jerzy Bitschan, who died during the war, also got a place in the song:¹³

[...]

Bije się Jurek w szeregu,
Cmentarnych broni wzgórz,

[...]

[...]

Jurek is fighting in a row,
defends the Cemetery hills,

[...]

¹² Ibidem, 254–255. Batiar is a representative of Lviv suburbs. A young, clever and even feisty boy, sometimes living at odds with the law. The myth of the Lviv batiar was created in the interwar period.

¹³ Ibidem, 258.

Often, the verbal layer of the sung Lviv folklore was created by introducing updating changes to already existing texts, as well as by creating new lyrics to existing, usually widely known melodies. Numerous topographic indications point to the strong connection with the city and its inhabitants – names of districts, specific places, as well as names of persons.

In Warsaw, as in Lviv, the outbreak of war was associated with hopes for regaining independence. Leaflets appeared, and in them texts reflecting “street” versions of war events. One of them is entitled *The latest Christmas carols about Wiluś* and concerns the failure of the German offensive of Warsaw:

Wiluś jechał z żołnierzami,
By zawładnąć Warszawą,
Lecz nie wiedział że dostanie
Tęgie lanie pod Mławą.

Wiluś rode with soldiers,
To dominate Warsaw,
But he didn't know he would get
Huge defeat at Mława.

It is an example of pro-Russian propaganda that promised, though not directly, the emergence of an independent Polish state:¹⁴

Wódz Naczelny ogłosił,
Że wskrzesi polską ziemię.
Połączy rozerwane jej części.
[...]
Szwab się o tym dowiedział
I ze złości zzieleniał,
Poprzyśiągł że nas zniszczy doszczętnie,
[...]

The commander-in-chief announced
That he would resurrect Poland.
Will connect the torn parts.
[...]
Kraut found out about this
And he turned green with anger
He swore that he would destroy us completely,
[...]

These texts mention Emperor Wilhelm and Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, who, wanting to win the favor of the inhabitants in the face of the changing fate of the ongoing battles, promised, very generally, the possibility of the rebirth of the Polish state and the unification of Polish lands under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar.

Many popular poems, but also songs of wartime Warsaw concerned not historical or military events, but illustrated the everyday life of Warsaw's street, including the activities of the wartime nouveau riche, thieves, rogues and smugglers. They were often arranged to known and popular melodies. This is

¹⁴ Bronisław WIECZORKIEWICZ, *Warszawskie ballady podwórzowe* [Warsaw urban ballads] (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1971), 156-157.

a different face of war, seen from the perspective of an ordinary man who suffered from food supply difficulties accompanying the military occupation:¹⁵

Warszawa to gród syreni,
Każdy pieni się, gdy ceni,
Wartość chleba powszedniego
I domieszki wszystkie jego.

Warsaw is a mermaid castle,
Everyone foams when they value
The value of daily bread
And all its additions.

Tra ra ra, piekarz na żołądkach gra,
Tra ra ra, kamienicę z mąki ma.
Tra ra ra, choć którego trafi szlak,
Precz kłopoty, bo hołoty
W Warszawie nie brak.
[...]


Tra ra ra, a baker with stomachs plays,
Trara ra, a tenement house made of flour.
Trara ra, though who will be angry,
Trouble away, because trash
There is no shortage in Warsaw.
[...]

I did not find this thread in the Lviv repertoire regarding the First War, but in the repertoire created during World War II – it appears.

Also for Silesia, the First War was associated with hopes of joining Poland. These are stories of Silesian uprisings and their presence in Silesian songs.¹⁶

One of them mentions the date 1921, i.e. the date of the third Silesian Uprising:¹⁷

♩-94(23')



Ten dwudzie-szy pie-ruszy ro-czek ca-ty krwią za-...-la-...ny,
któ-ry chłopak naj-lá-dnie-jszy do wojska za-...-bra-...ny,
któ-ry chłopak naj-lá-dnie-jszy do wojska za-...-bra-...ny.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 171.

¹⁶ The treaty ending the First World War did not settle Silesia's belonging to Poland, which belonged to the Prussian partition before the war. The plebiscite was to settle this. It was preceded by two Silesian uprisings (1919, 1920). A few months after the plebiscite (1921) a third uprising broke out.

¹⁷ Adolf DYGAŁCZ, *Pieśni powstańcze* [The insurgency songs] (Katowice: Górnośląska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1997), 101.

Ten dwudziesty pierwszy roczek cały krwią
zalany,
Który chłopak najładniejszy do wojska zabrany.
[...]

This twenty-first year flooded with
blood,
Every pretty boy is taken to the army.
[...]

The history of this song is special because of its extraordinary vitality and the ability to adapt fragments of the text, especially the date, to current historical events. In a much earlier version, though not Silesian, it begins with an line *Year eighteen sixty-six*. It concerns the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and the battle of Königgratz (Sadowa), which ended with the defeat of the Austrian army, in which Poles also probably served. Perhaps that is why it is believed to have been created in the Austro-Hungarian army.¹⁸ Bystron included it in his study devoted to historical themes in folk songs.¹⁹ By updating the dates, but keeping the construction pattern, the song entered the repertoire of legion songs, it was sung by Silesian insurgents, and by changing the date to 1939 it referred to the beginning of World War II. Updating procedures mainly concern the first verse containing the date; further verses do not contain historical references.

Among the insurgent songs there was another variant of this thread. In the first verse there is the date: *year sixty-six*, which indicates the year of the Battle of Königgratz (1866), which perhaps the anonymous creator did not pay attention to. However, in the next verse, the thread was updated, thanks to which the song was clearly associated with the Silesian Uprising.²⁰

[...]
A ja będę masierował póki sił stanie,
Aże zajde do Bytomia na śląskie powstanie.

[...]
And I will march as long as I have enough strength,
Until I reach Bytom for the Silesian Uprising.

This is not the only example of the adaptation of Silesian songs quite widely known in different regions of the thematic thread associated with the First World War. It is worth mentioning the song with the first verse *The Polish*

¹⁸ Andrzej ROMANOWSKI, *Przed złotym czasem* [Before gold time] (Kraków: Znak, 1990), 38.

¹⁹ Jan St. BYSTRON, *Historja w pieśni ludu polskiego* [History in the polish folk songs] (Warszawa-Kraków: Gebethner i Wolff, 1925).

²⁰ DYGACZ, *Pieśni powstańcze*, 94.

*Army is enlisting (A do polskiej armii wojsko zaciągają).*²¹ The Silesian version changes the first verse, associating the song with the Silesian uprisings. In the uprising version it sounds like this: *The Bytom riflemen are enlisting (Do bytomskich strzelców wojska zaciągają):*²²

Do bytomskich strzelców wojska zaciągają
Niejednej dziewczynie, niejednej kochance
Serce zasmucają, serce zasmucają.
[...]

The Bytom riflemen are enlisting
More than one girl, more than one lover
Is getting sad, is getting sad.
[...]

The course of further verses is in most variants very similar and addresses the subject of regret, longing, death in war.

Among other historical information contained in the verbal layer of Silesian songs, places of insurgent fighting are mentioned, in particular Mount Saint Anne (Góra Świętej Anny):²³

[...]
Hej, pod święta Anną, bitwa się toczyła
A maszynka moja orgeszów kosiła.
[...]

[...]
Hey, near St. Anne, the battle was going on
And my weapon killed the Orghets.
[...]

In May 1921, during the 3rd Silesian Uprising, a fierce battle was fought there, and Orghets were German militias – Organisation Escherich.

In the next verse appears Kędzierzyn, a city in Opole Silesia:

[...]
A pod Kędzierzynem pierona kandego,
Tam maszynka moja miała prac do czego.
[...]

[...]
And near Kędzierzyn God damn it,
That weapon of mine had lots to do.
[...]

A plebiscite is mentioned from historical events:²⁴

²¹ *Warmia i Mazury* [Warmia and Mazury region], vol. 2: *Pieśni balladowe i społeczne* [Folk ballads and social songs], ed. by B. Krzyżaniak, A. Pawlak (Warszawa: Instytut Sztuki PAN, 2002) (in the series: *Polska Pieśń i Muzyka Ludowa – Źródła i Materiały*, vol. 3), 219.

²² DYGA CZ, *Pieśni powstańcze*, 24. Bytom Riflemen is a military formation.

²³ Ibidem, 34.

²⁴ Ibidem, 51.



Już plebiscyt tu nadchodzi
 Romtaj dija dom, romtaj dija dom,
 German z Śląska już uchodzi
 Romtaj dija dom, romtaj dija dom.
 [...]

The plebiscite is coming here
 Romtaj dija dom, romtaj dija dom,
 German from Silesia is already escaping
 Romtaj dija dom, romtaj dija dom.
 [...]

It is also worth pointing to such songs about historical or war references in which historical figures are presented in the form of mockery. There are many such mocking lyrics in the repertoire of Silesian songs mocking historical figures, especially rulers – here especially the emperor and king of Prussia Wilhelm II:²⁵



Wiluś w Holandyi śledziami handluje
 Widzisz ty pieronie, jak ci to pasuje.

Wiluś sells herring in the Netherlands
 You damn see how it suits you.

²⁵ Ibidem, 134.

After forced abdication in 1918, Wilhelm moves from the military quarters to the Netherlands, which as a neutral state granted him asylum.

Or:



Z tamtej strony Odry kąpała się wrona
A Wilusiek myślał że to jego żona

On the other bank of Odra a crow was bathing
And Wilusiek thought it was his wife.²⁶

World War II

Also, the Second War was reflected in city folklore, although the Lviv repertoire is much more modest in this respect than the Warsaw one. Despite the horror of war, Lviv street referred to the wartime life of the city with its own humor:²⁷

Achtung, alarm zarzundzonu,
Wszystku wieji już du schronu,
A teściowa już nam mdleje,
Zienć zaś na niu wody leji.
[...]
Panna Mańka fest si boji,
Nu, a Józyk robi swoi...
Cos jij szepcy du ucha
Bu Manusia szac dziewucha.
Lecu bomby na ulicy,
Domy pału się jak świcy
Wszystki szyby wylatują,
A Moskali bombardują.
[...]

Achtung, an emergency call,
Everyone is rushing to the shelter,
And the mother-in-law faints,
The son-in-law pours water on her.
[...]
Miss Mańka is very afraid
Well, and Józek is doing his job...
Something whispers in her ear
Because Manusia is a girl.
There are bombs on the street
Houses burn like candles
All the windows are falling out,
And the Muscovites are bombing.
[...]

²⁶ Ibidem, 136.

²⁷ Janusz WASYLKOWSKI, *Piosenka lwowska na wojennym szlaku* [Lviv urban song on war trail] (Warszawa: Instytut Lwowski, 1999).

The song probably refers to 1944, when the Russians began night raids on Lviv, occupied by the Germans. Regardless of the bombs falling, the inhabitants were troubled by food and living difficulties:

[...]
Wstajesz ranu, chliba ni ma
Du roboty trzeba gnać,
Bu w ojczyźni tej Stalina,
Taki żyćci, kurwa mać.

[...]
You wake up, no bread
You have to run to work,
Because in this homeland of Stalin,
That's fucking life.

The occupation situation of Warsaw was favored by a large number of songs, some of which were written by writers trying to refer to street songs, others are anonymous, spontaneously created and were further disseminated. They were often disseminated by ubiquitous street newsboys, as well as bands playing in the courtyards, as long as it turned out to be safe and the forbidden repertoire could be performed.

Among street songs, a reference to a specific date, and thus also a historical event, is provided in the example below:²⁸

Dnia pierwszego września roku pamiętnego
Wróg napadł na Polskę z kraju
niemieckiego.

On the first of September, the memorable year
The enemy invaded Poland from a German
country.

Najwięcej się zawziął na naszą Warszawę,
Warszawo kochana tyś jest miasto krwawe.
[...]

He got the most out of our Warsaw,
Beloved Warsaw, you are a bloody city.
[...]

One can also find ridiculing threads:²⁹

Nad modrom rzekom goniąc spojrzaniem
siedzi Adolfek zgorzkniały:
Już od niedawna, myśli z westchnieniem,
wszyscy mi robiom kawały.

Adolfek sits bitterly looking over the blue
rivers:
Recently, he thinks with a sigh, everyone is
making jokes at me.

Odkąd wywiałeś na samolocie , kochany mój
Rudolfuniu
Muszę ja wmawiać mojej hołocie, że miałeś
kuku na muniu.
[...]

Ever since you left on the plane, my dear
Rudolph
I have to convince my scum that you were a
freak.
[...]

²⁸ WIECZORKIEWICZ, *Warszawskie ballady podwórzowe*, 301.

²⁹ Leaflet of Stowarzyszenie Grajków Wędrownych „Zaranie” 1943.

Rudolf Hess, one of Hitler's deputies, in 1941 went to England on his own initiative with a peaceful proposal. He was interned there. After Hess's escape, an official announcement stated that he suffered from a mental disorder.

I found traces of the mocking trend in a Krakow street song, although this current, apart from individual mentions, is not present in the source materials. Andrzej Chwalba, writing about the fate of Krakow during the Second World War, mentioned songs sung in bars and taverns. One of them belonged to the repertoire of the mentally unstable urban bard called "Cezar":³⁰

Nim odwalisz kite,
Hitlerze ty dumny,
idź se na tandete,
kup se gwóźdź do trumny.
[...]

Before you die,
Hitler the proud,
Go to the market,
Buy yourself nail to your coffin.
[...]

In the Silesian repertoire, the theme of mockery is not common, however it occurs:³¹

Hitlerze, Hitlerze, marny fifidroku,
Nie zniszczysz ty Polski za jedne pół roku.
[...]

Hitler, Hitler, you fifidrok,
You won't destroy Poland in barely half a year.
[...]

In the next stanza, however, reference is made to the changes introduced by the occupation authorities, replacing the names of the smelter and mine mentioned in the text with previous German names:

Darmoś przemianował „Pokój”, „Wujek”
„Zgoda”
już niedługo potrwa twa hitlersko moda.
[...]

Futilely you renamed „Peace”, „Uncle”,
“Consent”.
Your Hitlers' way will not stand long time.
[...]

The terror of war is reflected in the text of another song:

³⁰ Andrzej CHWALBA, *Dzieje Krakowa. Kraków w latach 1939–1945* [History of Kraków. Kraków at years 1939–1945] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 336. The song has further verses containing rather unsophisticated content.

³¹ Adolf DYGAŁCZ, *Pieśni ludowe miasta Katowic* [Folk songs from Katowice] (Katowice: Katowickie Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne, 1987), 101–102, 104. Fifidrok is a local dialect, it means a fool.

Moja rodzineczka tak mi marnie ginie braciszka mi powiesili, siostra w Oświęcimie. [...] Oświęcimski lager, wielkie zasmucenie, Ci co tak rozporządzają, stracili sumienie. [...]	My dear family is dying so poorly My brother was hanged, sister in Oświęcim. [...] Oświęcim lager, great sorrow, Those who ordered it, lost their conscience. [...]
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The above examples of sung urban folklore are only part of the repertoire containing historical references, although all the main themes are included here. In the city (street) repertoire of Lviv, Warsaw, or Silesia, events, historical facts commented on by a street song or song relate primarily to contemporary, current situations, “here and now”. There is no reference to past events in urban musical folklore. The city song commented on the current course of hostilities and independence aspirations, because they strongly influenced the lives of the inhabitants. Some of the lyrics were created by updating already existing threads.

Recalling historical events is present in three ways: by direct reference to an event [place, character], or from the perspective of the everyday life of a city dweller [emotions, fears, but also negative phenomena – e.g. taking advantage of the harm of others]. In the third case, the historical figures are presented in a mocking form, in texts mocking the main actors of the war theater: the Emperor and King of Prussia Wilhelm II and Hitler. And perhaps it was these songs that made it easier to survive the horror of war.

War threads and historical facts appear in one, sometimes several verses of a longer, multi-stanza song. The other stanzas of these songs relate to emotional relations: longing of mother for son, young soldier for girl, regret and fear of death. In other cases, the next stanzas continued the main content thread. It should be noted that the melodic layer of songs on this subject does not have any special features emphasizing the content of the verbal layer. Therefore, it was not subject of analysis.

Summary

The First and Second World War, striving for independence, Silesian Uprisings, were reflected in urban folklore, especially in Warsaw, Lviv and Silesia. In Lviv, the songs were about the fate of the city's residents serving in the Austro-Hungarian army on various fronts of the First War, the song of the Warsaw street told about various aspects of occupation life, the Silesian insurgent repertoire reflects the aspiration of the Silesians to connect with Poland.

War events are reflected in this repertoire in different ways. Firstly, referring to specific historical events: dates, places of battles, names, etc. Secondly, showing the suffering, fear and uncertainty that accompanies both city residents and soldiers, and which the street song has often tamed with humorous and mocking elements. And thirdly – by showing the phenomena that usually accompany difficult times of war: smuggling, making money from others' poverty, etc. All this can be found in the urban repertoire, because the songs of urban folklore usually reacted vividly to external events, commenting on them characteristic way.

Keywords

urban music folklore, historical facts in an urban song

